

VZCZCXRO8226
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHRL #1216/01 1691224
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 181224Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8569
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0205
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0192

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 001216

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/18/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNMIK](#) [RU](#) [YI](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON KOSOVO

Classified By: POL M/C JOHN BAUMAN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) (Summary) We have had several opportunities over the past few days to take soundings from German officials and interlocutors outside government on how they view the way forward in Kosovo. As expected, they are preoccupied with maintaining EU unity and full of legalistic anxieties about the consequences of moving forward without a UNSC resolution.

Whether the German government would ultimately back Kosovo independence without a Security Council resolution is not yet clear, but German officials increasingly feel there is strong time pressure to achieve a status solution and want to consult with us about possible ways forward. Deputy National Security advisor Rolf Nikel noted that Putin explicitly threatened to veto a UNSC resolution on Kosovo when he met with Chancellor Merkel on the margins of the G-8 summit last week. Nikel had no solution to offer given the threat of a Russian veto, the time pressure, and the need he saw for UN support. Several of our interlocutors (who are not government policymakers on Kosovo) argued that politicians should begin to prepare the German public for a way forward without a Security Council resolution. (End Summary)

Chancellery Comments

¶2. (C) Deputy National Security Advisor Rolf Nikel told us last week that, during a bilateral meeting at the G-8 Summit, President Putin explicitly told Chancellor Merkel that Russia would veto the current proposed UNSCR. Nikel said Russia objected to references to independence and to the endorsement of the Ahtisaari plan. Nikel said a resolution that did not include these references probably would be acceptable to Russia. He said that Russia wants to be involved in the negotiations, and suggested that the lack of Russian involvement in negotiations over the Ahtisaari plan was probably its biggest defect in Russian eyes. Nikel also argued that Putin is honestly concerned about establishing a separatist precedent.

¶3. (C) According to Nikel, Putin also made clear to Merkel that he would like to postpone resolving Kosovo's status until after the Russian presidential election scheduled for March 2008. On the other hand, Nikel said German analysts do not believe we have that much time to wait for a status outcome. German government analysts believe events in Kosovo might come to a boil in the fall, with violent outbreaks beginning in October when students return to classes. Nikel said the Russians do not believe such time pressure exists, because previous predictions of violence have not come to pass, and because KFOR could contain any violence that does break out.

¶4. (C) Nikel stressed the vital need to convince the Kosovo Albanians that the progress toward independence has begun before the end of summer. Nikel also stressed the need for UN support of the proposed Kosovo ESDP mission to validate its legitimacy. Nikel had no solution for how to move

forward given the threat of a Russian veto, the time pressure, and the need for UN support. He stated that Germany was fully occupied with trying to maintain EU unity, which would be maintained if a new UNSC resolution was passed, but would disappear if the process moved forward without a new resolution. Nikel indicated German openness to further discussions with the USG on how to move forward, especially in regard to the likely ramifications of Kosovo's independence on frozen conflicts.

Interlocutors Outside Government

15. (C) At a recent non-public discussion on Kosovo led by former parliamentarian Karsten Voigt (currently MFA coordinator for German-American relations), several participant, including Voigt and a CDU parliamentary staffer, argued that German politicians should begin preparing the German public and political class for the possibility that Kosovo independence will have to take place in the absence of a UN resolution. Voigt stressed that such an outcome would create mammoth international legal difficulties, but concluded that parliamentarians should at least begin to raise this possibility publicly to see if such an outcome could become a politically acceptable option. Voigt stressed that he was making this suggestion in his private capacity, not in his role as an MFA official.

16. (C) Hans Joachim Falenski, senior staff assistant to MFA Coordinator for Russian-German relations (and CDU member of parliament) Andreas Schockenhoff, told us in a separate conversation that he favored a "two-track" approach. He argued that Quint members should make clear that they are holding discussions on the possibility of moving forward on Kosovo status without a UN resolution. In addition, the EU

BERLIN 00001216 002 OF 002

should take steps that would begin the process of de facto recognition of Kosovo (such as giving Kosovo delegations observer status at certain EU meetings). This would signal clearly to the Kosovo-Albanians that the international community was serious about honoring the implicit promise already given to the Kosovar-Albanians--that the only acceptable status outcome was independence.

17. (C) At the same time, according to Falenski, negotiations with Russia and Serbia should continue. During this time the EU should make further gestures indicating that Serbia had a clear path to the EU if it went along with Kosovo independence. In this way, Falenski argued, Serb (and Russian) acquiescence in a UN resolution might still be achievable. He stressed the legal difficulties involved in moving ahead without a UN resolution, and expressed doubts whether the EU could obtain consensus for fully recognizing Kosovo independence without a UN resolution.

KOENIG